

Are You Ready?

TORNADOES



An Emergency Preparedness Fact Sheet for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

When a tornado is coming, you only have a short time to make important decisions. Planning ahead for a tornado will keep you and your family and friends safe.

Plan ahead.

Practice tornado drills in your household or workplace each year during the tornado season. Find an area in the home in the basement or away from windows as a shelter and practice how to get into the shelter. It is important that you work with your local police and fire department, and the local Red Cross program to address any gaps in alerting and warning systems. Know your needs and be prepared.

Stock up on supplies, such as:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cell phone with text message feature or 2-way pager and charger to use in your automobile
- Portable TTY with extra batteries
- Batteries and back-up hearing assistive technology
- Portable battery-operated television with extra batteries and charger to use in your automobile
- NOAA radios with text alerts and visual and/or tactile alerts, or AM/FM portable radio if you can hear it with a neckloop or headset
- Extra contact lenses or eyeglasses
- Paper and pens
- First aid kit
- Food and water (for up to 72 hours)
- Non-electric can opener
- Cash and credit cards
- Work or hiking shoes/boots to protect your feet when walking thru disaster areas

Develop an emergency communication plan.

In case your household members are separated from one another during a tornado, have a back-up plan where you can meet each other. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be a contact person. After the tornado, contact that person by pager or TTY. If you don't have a working TTY or pager, ask a hearing person with a cell phone to call for you. Be sure each household member knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

Be alert.

A tornado watch is an announcement by the National Weather Service when tornadoes are possible in your area. Watch for approaching storms. This is a good time to remind your household members where the safest places are in your home, and to check your pager or websites for further warnings. A tornado watch means there may be a possible tornado in your area. A tornado warning means that the tornado has already been seen in the area.

Mobile homes

During tornadoes, mobile homes are usually in danger. A mobile home can topple, even if tied down. If there is a tornado in your area, take shelter in a building with a strong foundation. If no building is available, lie in the ditch or a low safe area away from buildings.

During the tornado:

If at home:

- Go to a storm shelter, basement, or room that has no windows, or to a lower level.
- If there is no basement, go to a hallway or a smaller room without windows, such as a bathroom or a closet. Stay away from all windows.
- Remain in the center of the room. Stay away from corners; they tend to attract debris.
- Sit or lie under sturdy furniture, such as a heavy table or desk, and hold onto it.
- Cover your head and neck with your arms.
- If you are in a mobile home, get out and find a safe place.

If at school or work:

- Go to the basement or to an inside hallway at the lowest level.
- Avoid places like an auditorium, cafeteria, large hallways or shopping malls.
- Sit or lie under sturdy furniture, such as a heavy table or desk, and hold onto it.
- Cover your head and neck with your arms.

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Inspecting utilities in a damaged home:

Gas:

Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or suspect a possible leak, open a window and leave the building *immediately*. Turn off the gas outside at the main valve. Ask a neighbor or friend to contact the gas company if you cannot use your pager or TTY. If the gas has been turned off, let the gas company turn your gas back on.

Electricity:

Look for electrical damage. If you see sparks or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn your electrical power off at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If there are sewage lines or water pipes near the fuse box or circuit breaker, call a licensed electrician.

Water/Sewage:

Check sewage line and water pipes for any damage. If there is damage on the sewage line, avoid using a toilet and contact a plumber. If there is damage along or on the water pipes, avoid using the water. If you do not have bottled water, use water from ice cube trays in your freezer.

Information adapted from materials by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov).

Fujita–Pearson Tornado Scale

F-0 (40-72 mph): chimney damage, tree branches broken

F-1 (73-112 mph): mobile homes pushed off foundation or overturned

F-2 (113-157 mph): considerable damage, mobile homes demolished, trees uprooted

F-3 (158-205 mph): roofs and walls torn down, trains overturned, cars thrown

F-4 (207-260 mph): well-constructed walls leveled

F-5 (261-318 mph): homes lifted off foundation and carried considerable distances, autos thrown as far as 100 meters



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